

REMARKS

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Claim 10 has been canceled and independent claim 1 has been amended so as to include the limitations previously recited in claim 10. Claims 35-37 have been added. Claims 1-19, 21-30 and 35-37 remain in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested.

II. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present inventions, as defined by the claims, are directed generally to steerable loop structures. Referring to Figure 1, a formal version of which is reproduced below for the Examiner's convenience, a catheter 10 in accordance with one embodiment of a present invention is shown being used in combination with a sheath 22. The catheter 10 includes a catheter body 12 that extends through the sheath 22. The proximal end of the catheter body 12 is secured to a handle 16. A **pull wire 26** extends from the distal end of the catheter body 12 proximally along the **exterior** of the catheter body to a handle 28. The pull wire 26 may be used to pull the distal portion of the catheter body into a loop structure 30. The exemplary embodiment also includes a pair of steering wires 52a and 52b that are connected to the distal portion of the elongate body 12. The steering wires 52a and 52b extend through the **interior** of the catheter body 12 to a lever 60 on the handle 16.

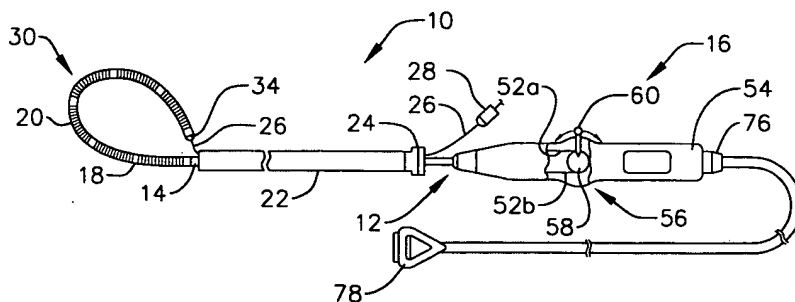


Figure 1 of the Present Application

Turning to Figure 6 of the present application, a formal version of which is reproduced below for the Examiner's convenience, the steering wires 52a and 52b may be used to deflect a portion 50 of the loop structure 30 **out of the loop structure plane** in order to improve contact between the electrodes 20 and tissue. [See also the specification page 10, line 22 to page 11, line 8.]

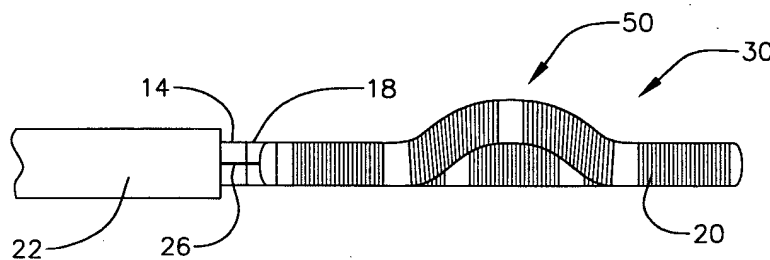


Figure 6 of the Present Application

III. PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

A. The Rejections

Claims 1-4, 8-10, 21-23 and 28-30 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,332,880 to Yang ("the Yang '880 patent"). Claims 5-7 and 24-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the combined teachings of the Yang '880 patent and U.S. Patent No. 6,048,329 to Thompson ("the Thompson '329 patent").

As claim 10 has been canceled, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection thereof under U.S.C. § 102 has been rendered moot. The rejections of the remaining claims under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 are respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended above. Reconsideration thereof is respectfully requested.

B. Discussion With Respect To Claims 1-4, 8 And 9

Independent claim 1 calls for a combination of elements comprising "an elongate body," "at least one operative element supported on the distal region of the elongate

body,” “a ***pull wire*** defining a distal portion associated with the distal end of the elongate body and a proximal portion ***extending along the exterior of the elongate body*** toward the proximal region of the elongate body” and “a steering element secured to the distal portion of the elongate body and ***extending within the interior of the elongate body*** to the proximal region of the elongate body.” The combinations defined by claims 2-4, 8 and 9 include, *inter alia*, the elements recited in claim 1. The cited reference fails to teach or suggest the claimed combinations.

Referring to Figures 1-4B, the Yang ‘880 patent discloses an apparatus in which a catheter tube 12 extends through a sheath 26. The sheath includes a slot 40 near the distal end 30. A plurality of electrodes 28 are carried by a structure 20 that is attached to the distal end 16 of the catheter tube 12. A loop is formed by pushing the catheter tube 12 distally relative to the sheath 26, which causes the structure 20 to bulge out of the slot 40. [Note Figure 3A and column 9, lines 17-30.] Additionally, a bendable spring 64 may be positioned in the distal end 16 of the catheter tube and one or more steering wires 66 may be secured to the bendable spring. [Note Figures 1 and 2A and column 11, lines 33-53.]

Clearly, with respect to the apparatus illustrated in Figures 1-4B of the Yang ‘880 patent, the only structural element that (1) is associated with the distal end of an elongate body that carries an operative element, i.e. the Yang catheter tube 12/structure 20 that carries electrodes 28, and (2) extends along the exterior of the elongate body, is the Yang ***sheath*** 26. The combination defined by independent claim 1, on the other hand, calls for “a ***pull wire*** defining a distal portion associated with the distal end of the elongate body and a proximal portion extending along the exterior of the elongate body.” Applicant respectfully submits that a sheath simply is not a pull wire.

As the Yang ‘880 patent fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the combination recited in independent claim 1, applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-4, 8 and 9 are patentable thereover and that the rejection of claims 1-4, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 should be withdrawn.

C. Discussion With Respect To Claims 5-7

Applicant respectfully submits that the Thompson '329 patent fails to teach or suggest anything that would remedy the above-identified deficiencies in the Yang '880 patent with respect to independent claim 1. As such, claims 5-7 are patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1 and the rejection of claims 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 should be withdrawn.

D. Discussion With Respect to Claims 21-23, 29 And 30

Independent claim 21 calls for a combination of elements comprising "an elongate body," "a loop structure associated with the distal region of the elongate body and defining an interior and a loop structure plane," "at least one operative element supported on the loop structure" and "a steering element ***extending through the interior of the loop structure*** and the interior of the elongate body to the proximal region of the elongate body, the steering element being ***secured to the loop structure such that proximal movement of the steering element will bend a portion of the loop structure out of the loop structure plane and leave the remainder of the loop structure in the loop structure plane.***" The combinations defined by claims 22, 23, 29 and 30 include, *inter alia*, the elements recited in claim 21. The cited reference fails to teach or suggest the claimed combinations.

Referring to Figures 1 and 2A, the Yang '880 patent discloses that the distal end 16 of the catheter tube 12 may be deflected through the use of a spring 64 and one or more steering wire 66. [Column 11, lines 33-53.] Applicant respectfully submits that, in contrast to the combination of elements defined by independent claim 21, the Yang spring 64 and steering wire(s) 66 do not "***bend a portion*** of the loop structure out of the loop structure plane and ***leave the remainder*** of the loop structure in the loop structure plane." Given their location relative to the electrode support structure 20 and the sheath slot 40, the Yang spring 64 and steering wire(s) 66 will instead bend the entire loop one way or another.

As the Yang '880 patent fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the combination recited in independent claim 21, applicant respectfully submits that claims 21-23, 29 and 30 are patentable thereover and that the rejection of claims 21-23, 29 and 30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 should be withdrawn.

F. Discussion With Respect to Claims 24-27

Applicant respectfully submits that the Thompson '329 patent fails to teach or suggest anything that would remedy the above-identified deficiencies in the Yang '880 patent with respect to independent claim 21. As such, claims 24-27 are patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 21 and the rejection of claims 24-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 should be withdrawn.

III. NEWLY PRESENTED CLAIMS 35-37

Newly presented claims 35-37 depend from independent claim 21 and, accordingly, are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 21.

IV. CLOSING REMARKS

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the application are in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application, as amended, are respectfully requested. Allowance of the claims at an early date is courteously solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call applicant's undersigned representative at (310) 563-1458 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

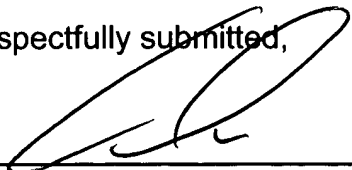
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0638. Should such

fees be associated with an extension of time, applicant respectfully requests that this paper be considered a petition therefor.

7/27/04
Date

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Respectfully submitted,



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